

I notice that the boards of trade in the western portion of the Dominion are excessively modern, they are attempting things and doing things that twenty years ago no board of trade would dream of attempting. And as a general thing I think I am right in saying that the modern board of trade is quite a different institution from the old and somewhat academic board of trade of our fathers.

Boards of trade, I suppose we will all agree, are interested in two things. Primarily they are interested in the interchange of commodities—that is what business men are engaged in. But when we think for a single moment that the basis of interchange must be production, and that without production in the first place there could be no interchange, you will conclude that the live board of trade must have just as strong an interest in production as in interchange, the one being the basis of the other.

Singularly enough the Department of Trade and Commerce finds itself in the very same position. Trade and Commerce—the interchange of commodities, either amongst ourselves, one with the other, or between ourselves and foreign countries—that is the interesting question with which the Trade and Commerce department has to deal. But it could not deal with that in the way of interest or in the way of capacity unless it had an equal eye to the primary process of production, without which we should have neither foreign nor interprovincial trade. Arguing out in that way the Department of Trade and Commerce and the boards of trade of this country are at least first cousins, if not brothers, in the matter of trade interest.

I would have you know that the Minister of Trade and Commerce, like every other Minister, when he is sitting in his office at Ottawa is a very important personage—he is supposed to know everything and to be bold enough to tackle anything. That however is I am afraid a great deal more in supposition rather than in reality. The individual member of the board of trade is an important personage as well and so is the collective board of trade, and if I am to get right down to brass tacks, I might find it a truth that many members in many boards of trade have an idea that they could direct the Department of Trade and Commerce or any other department much better than the men who have them in charge at present.